

shop of *L O N D O N*'s Ninth
CONFERENCE

With his
CLERGY

Upon the
 th and Tenth *INJUNCTIONS*,

Given by the



K I N G

February the 15th. 1694

Held in the Years 1695. and 1696.

L O N D O N:

Printed by *Benj. Motte*, 1699.

CONFERENCE

CLERICAL

and Tenth INSTRUCTIONS

IN G



February the 15th 1895
Held in the Year 1895 and 1896

Printed by the Board of Education
1895

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THE

Bishop of LONDON's Ninth

CONFERENCE

With his

CLERGY, &c.

HAVING at several times formerly taken notice of so many of the Subjects of these Injunctions as concern the Clergy in general, except these two: I thought it might not be amiss to desire your advice upon them; especially since the Vanity of being thought Good natured, too often tempts Men to forget the discharge of a good Conscience, and the easiness of Complaisance draws them into those things which are not Convenient, but sometimes Scandalous.

I The Words of the Fifth Injunction run thus. "That that part of the 34th. Canon, which relates to the giving of Certificates, concerning the Lives and Manners of those who are to be Ordained, be strictly looked to. And that the Bishops lay it on the Consciences of the
A 2 "Clergy *Injunct. 5.*

"Clergy, that they sign no Certificates, unless, upon
 "their own knowledg, they judge the Persons to be
 "duly Qualified.

Can. 34.

The words of the Canon, so far as this Injunction is
 grafted upon it, are these: "Except he shall then exhibit
 "Letters Testimonial of his good Life and Conversa-
 "tion, under the Seal of some College in *Cambridge* or
 "Oxford, where before he remained, or of three or four
 "grave Ministers, together with the Subscription and
 "Testimony of other Credible Persons, who have
 "known his Life and Behaviour by the space of Three
 "Years next before.

The Church had several occasions for Letters recom-
 mendatory and Testimonials for the Security and Prefer-
 vation of her Discipline, according to the exigence of
 different Ages, as well for the brotherly and hospitable
 Reception of those that travel'd into Forain Jurisdictions,
 as for the satisfaction of those Churches they went to,
 that they might not be Imposed upon by False Brethren.
 These were called *Συμβουλευτικαὶ* by St. Paul. They
 were afterwards called *Litteræ Canonicae*, and sometimes
Formatae. Of which you have a learned discourse written
 by *Priorius* (a) But I believe you would be more sa-
 tisfied in the reason and authority of this sort of Creden-
 tials from the Canons of the Catholick Church, (b) under the
 four first General Councils. Which gave ground to those
 so many and divers directions afterwards in the following
 particular Councils of several Nations. But this were
 too large a Work, and too much beside our purpose to be
 treated of at this time.

We will therefore confine our selves to the conside-
 ration of those Letters Dimissory and Testimonials only,

2. Cor. 3. 1.
 Rom. 16. 1.
 Can. Apostolicum.
 num. 33.

(a) *Philippi Priorii de litteris Canonica dissertation.*
Paris. 1675. 8^o
 (b) *Canones Ecclesiae Universalis Justelli.*
Paris. Ed. 8^o

as relate to such as seek to enter into holy Orders. And this I conceive will appear in the best light, if we proceed by these Three steps.

- I. To look into the Appointment of them.
- II. To examine the Reason of that Appointment.
- III. To apply that Reason to our Behaviour in this particular.

I. As to the Appointment, it is so obvious a method to come to the knowledge of any thing otherwise out of our reach: that without question it must have been the universal Practice of all Ages. But it will suffice us to keep within the compass of our own Profession.

When *Moses* directed the People to find out fit Men to be Rulers over them, amongst other Enquiries, he would have them expect good Testimonials from their Neighbours and Acquaintance. *Take ye wise men and understanding, and known among your Tribes.* When the Apostles instituted Deacons, they gave this charge to the Disciples, *Look ye out among ye seven men of honest report.* We see the reason given, why *St. Paul* took *Timothy* forth with him, because he was well reported of by the Brethren that were at *Lystra* and *Iconium*. The Characters *St. Paul* requires of such as are to be admitted to the Orders of Bishops, Priests or Deacons, shews the necessity of good Testimonials: because many of those Particulars upon which that Character depended, could not otherwise be so well made out. And therefore he says, A Bishop must have a good report of them which are without. And of Deacons, Let these also first be proved.

Deut. 1. 15.

Act. 6. 3.

Act. 6. 2.

1. Tim. 3.

Tit. 1.

1. Tim. 3. 7.

Ps. 10.

Joan. 2. 20.

In conformity to this necessary Method of proceeding has the Church practised ever since. So it was in St. Cyprian's

(a) *Epist. 38. Edit. Oxon.*

In Ordinationibus Clericorum, Fratres charissimi, scilicet vos ante consulere, et mores ac merita singulorum communi consilio ponderare.

(b) *ἡ τοιαύτην πρὸς ὑμᾶς πρὸς τὸν τῶν ἐκείνου διακρίσειν. ἡ χειροτονία ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, καὶ συναγαγόντες αὐτὸν τὸ ἴδιον ἐπισκοπῇ, ἢ ἀποστολῇ, ὁ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ αὐτῇ, ἀκροῖς ἔστω ἡ χειροτονία. Concil. Nic. Can. 16.*

(c) *Εἰς τὴν κληρίκους ἡ ἀγορεύει ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ πᾶσι δὲ συστακῶν γενομένων τῶν ἐκείνου ἐπισκοπῇ, μηδὲ ὅλοις μηδὲ μὴ λείγουσιν. Concil. Chalced. Can. 13.*

(d) *Quia contra gere potest, ne quis sacros Ordines consequi velit, atque tein, vitæ & morum probitatem, necnon genus mentiat: ut omnis via fraudis doloque præcludatur, literas secum deferens promouendus à iudice ordinario, vel consiliis loci unde originem duxerit, sive quem incolere consueverit, quibus testetur se idoneæ ætate bonisque moribus præditum, & legitimo sanguine seu matrimonio ortum: qui nisi Episcopo obulerit, ordine non donetur, nisi hæc ei auster perspicua sint, &c. Concil. Narbon. Can. 11.*

(a) time. "In the Ordination of Clergymen, most dearly beloved Brethren, we are used to consult you beforehand, and by common consent examine both the Manners and Merits of each Person. For this reason it is, that the Council of Nice (b) would have every one Ordained in their own Diocese, where they are known. "If any Bishop shall presume to take one out of another Diocese and Ordain him in his Church, without the consent of his proper Bishop, from whom he has departed, such Ordination shall be void. To the same purpose is that of Chalcedon (c). "Strange and unknown Clergymen are by no means to officiate in another City without commendatory Letters from their own Bishop. But these primitive Councils had the Apostolick practice too fresh before them, to need such particular directions as were given by later Councils. Among which you have one that says, (d). "Because it may so fall out that they who desire to get into Holy Orders, may give a false account of their Lives and Conversation, as likewise of their Pedigree: to the end that every way to Fraud and Deceit may be stoppt: let him that is to be promoted to any Degree bring with him Letters from his Ordinary, or the chief Men of the Place where he was born or wont to inhabit, by which he may be attested to be of full Age, of a good Conversation, &c. which unless he bring to the Bishop, let him not be Ordained, unless it appear evident to him some other way, &c. There is likewise another remarkable Passage in the same Council,

ut omnis via fraudis doloque præcludatur, literas secum deferens promouendus à iudice ordinario, vel consiliis loci unde originem duxerit, sive quem incolere consueverit, quibus testetur se idoneæ ætate bonisque moribus præditum, & legitimo sanguine seu matrimonio ortum: qui nisi Episcopo obulerit, ordine non donetur, nisi hæc ei auster perspicua sint, &c. Concil. Narbon. Can. 11.

(a) Wherein shall be contained this Clause, *whom we find to be fit and worthy*; or else no credit shall be given to the Letters. To the same purpose it is expressed in another Council. “(b) Dioceſans are not to promote any to Holy Orders, before they have ſeen Testimonials from the Miſter of their Pariſh, wherein are contained the Depoſitions of two or three approved unſuſpected Witneſſes, given upon Oath, of the ſufficiency of their Age, and of their commendable and unblamed Life. Thus we ſee, we may eaſily gather from what has been quoted, that the Church was careful in all Ages to admit of none but approved Perſons to the Miniſtry.

II. Therefore it may be convenient in the ſecond place to look into the Reaſons of this cautious Proceeding. And truly they are ſo natural, that it is impoſſible they ſhould bear any Debate. For common Reaſon tells us, we muſt take our Information from others in thoſe things, the notice whereof we cannot attain to by our ſelves: and Experience teaches us to have a care whom we believe. So that where a Teſtimony is required, we are to receive it with great Warineſs. Now that part of ſatisfaction relating to Life and Converſation, which ought to be had before Perſons are admitted into Holy Orders, generally cannot be done by without ſufficient Testimonials. Which how cautiously they ſhould be admitted, appears plainly from the ill conſequences of a Miſtake in this kind. For

1. What a grievous Offence would it be to good Men to meet with ſuch ſpots in their Feaſts!
2. How would it make the Sacrifices of God to be loathed and abhorred eſpecially of the weaker and more undiſtinguiſhing ſort of People!

(a) *Quibus hanc inferes clauſulam, Quem idoneum & dignum reperimus: aut nulla literis fides habebitur.* Can. 12.

(b) *Non prius promoveant Dioceſani ſuos ad aliquem ſacrum Ordinem, quam viderint literas Testimoniales preſbyteri parochialis, quæ contineant duorum aut trium ceſtium probatorum, non ſuſceptorum depoſitiones juramento ſoleni firmatas de ſufficiencia ætatis promovendi, & de probatâ & inculpatâ illius viri.* Concil. Senonenſe. Can. 3.

3. How every way would God be provoked and his Honour blasphemed!
4. What a provocation would it be to despise the Ordinances of God, to uncharitableness, and to entertain ill thoughts of Religion itself for the sake of him that ministers in it!
5. As Example is the great director in the Lives and Conversation of men; what a fatal Misguidance must it be, when they who are set up for Lights to the World, turn *ignes fatui*, and lead people out of the way by their evil Practices! The Eye has a much quicker sense than the Ear, and makes a stronger impression upon the Mind. For Imitation of what we see, as it is more easy, so it is more natural than to learn by Precepts. (a) Men, therefore says *Lactantius*, choose Examples before words, because it is much easier to say than to do. Words are but speculative Expressions, and may please the Fancy: but Deeds make the deepest Impressions on the Heart. We may admire a man for his Ingenuity, that sets excellent Rules: but if he Practise by other measures, we are apter to follow his Life, than his Doctrine.

If then we put all Considerations together, and consider how abominable in the sight of God and how pernicious to men the disorderly walking of those who are admitted into Holy Orders, would be: what care has or can the Church take, which may prove too much to prevent so great an Evil!

III. Therefore ye see of how weighty a Concern it is, that ye behave yourselves uprightly in giving Testimonials to those who are to serve at the Altar, that neither Fear, Favour, Affection, nor Indifference prevail with you to give a rash, much less a false Certificate.

*Desipit exemplis
miseris
imitabile.
Horat.*

(a) Lib. 4.
de vera sapi-
entia.

If any Man should recommend an Officer to the State at all Adventures or out of Partiality, and this Man should prove any ways unfit for his Employment: would it not bring Shame upon the Voucher, and a publick Curse for his unadvised Officiousness? What an unneighbourly part is it to put a Servant upon another Man, whose Faults we know, or at least are ignorant of his Vertues? It is unkind and unjust at the best, and may prove barbarous. What Name then can we give that Action which imposes an unfaithful Servant upon the Church of God, where his Honour and the eternal Concern of his Creature's Soul is engaged, and endanger the Death of so many as he would save alive.

I will charitably hope, that no Man is wilfully guilty of a Transgression of this Nature. But we are apt to be of too easie a Disposition in this Case: and either out of an unwillingness to disoblige a Friend, or a desire to please him, or for some particular Kindness, or thro' an inconsiderate Easiness, to flatter ourselves with a General Presumption, that all is well; and so yield to a blind Compliance.

Indeed if such sort of Frailties might plead Prescription by being common; I know not any may bid fairer for it, than this: but the ill Consequences are such, as admit of no Excuse. For the Fitness of the Person to be admitted, as to his Morals, depends so entirely for the most part upon the Integrity of the Testimonial: that a Failure on this side renders the Certifier partaker of another Mans Sins, by loading the Ordinance of God with so heavy and so mischievous a Scandal. In effect it is a lying to God, if unadvisedly we recommend an ill Man to his Service.

Ye ought therefore not only for Reputation, but for Conscience sake, to be very wary whom ye witness for: that ye have a competent intimacy in the knowledge of them, as having to answer before God as well as Men for what ye do in this kind.

II. The Injunction we have hitherto conferred upon, is to keep safe the Door of the Church; that none be admitted to enter into it, but such as are fit for the Ministry: this other is to admonish such as are already entred; that they walk as in the sight of God, and do not by an unwary Behaviour bring reproach upon his Service. The Injunction is this. "That the Bishops shall look to the Lives and Manners of their Clergy, that they may be in all things regular and exemplary according to the 75th. Canon. The Canon upon which this is grafted runs thus. "No Ecclesiastical Persons shall at any time, other than for their honest Necessities, resort to any Taverns or Ale-houses, neither shall they board or lodge in any such places. Furthermore they shall not give themselves to any base or servile Labour, or to Drinking or Riot, spending their Time idly by Day or by Night, playing at Dice, Cards, or Tables, or any other unlawful Game: but at all times convenient, they shall hear or read somewhat of the Holy Scriptures, or shall occupy themselves with some other Honest Study or Exercise, always doing the things which shall appertain to Honesty, and endeavouring to profit the Church of God, having always in Mind that they ought to excel all others in Purity of Life, and should be Examples to the People to live well and Christianly, under pain of Ecclesiastical Censures to be inflicted with severity, according to the Qualities of their Offences.

Injunction 10.

Can. 75.

*Injunctions
given by the
Queen, in the
Year 1555.
Article 7.*

Whenever ye read over, as I hope sometimes ye do, the Exhortation that goes before the Questions in the Form for Ordaining Priests; ye will there find the Matter of this Canon treated in a fuller and more Pathetick Stile. Nor at all to derogate from the Expression of the Canon. For Laws we know, ought to be in as few and plain Words as may be: whereas Advices upon those Laws, have a Privilege to enforce the Reasonableness of them by the most powerful Arguments that can be found out, and to apply the most prevailing Inducements for their Observation.

The main Scope of this Canon seems to be a negative Direction to the Clergy, that they should not be guilty of such and such Irregularities, which are of the most noisy sort and give the most Publick Scandal. For however there may be others, as Covetousness, Ill nature or the like, that may cry as loud against us at the last day: yet those enumerated in the Canon are of a more clamorous kind in this World. But these are not all of the same nature. For some are absolutely unlawful as Drunkenness and all sorts of Riot: others are so only by accident, as Cards, Dice, Taverns and Alehouses. Luke 16. 15

The former seems not fitting to be taken notice of upon this occasion. For we are not to imagin, that any of our Brethren can be guilty of such gross Misdemeanours, as would render them the most unfortunate of Mankind. The wretched State such Ill Habits bring both upon Body and Mind is the least to be considered. Were it barely the disreputation of such courses, which to an Ingenuous Man is more grievous, than the loss of Life; it were but a light matter, in comparison of those dismal Consequences, which attend such disorders. Nay the Scandal, take it alone, is nothing when compared with the effects of it. *Hinc illa lachryma,*

lachryme; here lies the Transcendency of the Mischief, besides the Dishonour to God and his Worship, it staggers the Believer, it drives the weak Brother out of the Congregation, giving great occasion for Schism, confirms the Dissolute, and makes the Atheist triumph. Therefore I say, we ought rather to presume, that such destructive Vices can never take Root amongst us: than by Dehortations from what may be, cause Unwary and Malicious Men to conclude, that the Plague is already begun, and so bring a present Obloquy upon the Function. I will therefore I have not said too much upon this point. I will say no more: but proceed to those other Irregularities, which are so by Accident.

These we find to be of Two sorts.

- I. Such as relate to matters absolutely Prohibited.
- II. Such as are only so Conditionally.

I. The things absolutely prohibited in this Case are Cards, Dice and Tables; not as meerly unlawful in themselves, but of such a nature as for good reasons may be forbidden. For at the best they can no way turn to any profitable account, only serve to amuse at very Idle Hours. And then they are apt to draw on such Mischievous and Wicked Consequences; that if from the experience of such ill Effects, our Governours should not have power to Restrain the Cause, they would be hindered from answering one of the greatest ends of their Appointment. And therefore it is absolutely necessary, that they have a Power, in Prudence to withhold us from what is Dangerous: as in Justice to forbid what is simply Evil. An Army otherwise would be in a desperate condition.

tion, especially when near an Enemy, where the Loss of Gain of an opportunity is so ticklish, and for the most part so irrecoverable: if we should allow such Privileges to be disputed. And tho in the Civil Administration commonly the mischief of such a Licentiousness would not so quickly be felt: yet, like a lingering Disease, it would grow more and more uneasie to the State, till the one concluded in the ruin of the other.

In the things therefore that pertain unto Godliness, where the loss is not Transitory and Finite, but Eternal; how much more ready ought we to be, in owning that Authority, which would keep us out of Harms-way! For as I said before, Gaming is a Diversion that can do no Good, it is at best but an Idle Amusement, it may do much Harm. The temptations it carries with it are many and dangerous. If it proceed not at first from a covetous inclination, it seldom fails of concluding in it (a). And this frequently upon ill fortune causes great Passion, which often breaks out into Cursing and Swearing, sometimes attended with such horrid Blasphemies as would be dreadful to name. Besiyes it creates Quarrels, that are too often found guilty of Murder. And after all this, we see so clearly from constant experience, how natural it is to run into these Inconveniencies: that we may safely say, whoever ventures upon this Liberty, runs himself into such Temptations, as he knows not where they will end.

No wonder then if we meet with restrictive Laws in those places, where these Idle Divertisements have been followed. Our own Laws are an Instance, where in (b) one of them notice is taken of the many precedent Laws against them: and particularly they are forbid, not only as unprofitable, but as effeminating the persons engaged

(a) whoever would read at large the shameful consequence of this loose sort of entertainment, with the just characters of Theft, Robbery and the like that it is stigmatized with; let him consult Traſſar. Traſſar. Paradis de Puteo & aliorum de ludo. Num. 1. &c. fol. 151 &c. Tom. 7. (b) 33. H. 8. c. 9.

(a) 23. Pb. C.
m. c. 9.

(b) 16. Car. 2.
c. 5.

(c) *Senatus-consultum de-
iure in pecuni-
am ludere, prae-
terquam si qui-
seriet bastā,
vel pilas acien-
do, &c. quod
virtutis causa
fiat. ff. 11. § 6.
(d) Cod. 3. de.
42. 44.
Vid. Alex. ab
Alex. l. 3. c.
21.*

gaged in them. For they are observed to hinder those Manly and useful exercises of Arching and the like, which prepare Mens Bodies for Agility in War, and Vigour in other Employments for the Publick Good. Another (a) is very short, but yet complains of the mischievous effects of such prohibited Games, whereby Idle and Dissolute Persons are drawn together, and take that occasion to contrive Robberies and other Villanies. The last (b) is to prevent the fatal consequences which fall often upon whole Families, whose Fortunes are fairly or sowlly Impaired, if not Ruined, by the Extravagancies and Folly of a Young Heir, and many times by those that should have more Wit. And to shew that it is no new thing, we may find the like caution taken in former dayes, see the Roman (c) Laws. Nay it goes further in another place, (d) and not only makes the Debt contracted by Gaming void, but likewise the ready Money laid down by the Loofer recoverable by Law: alledging amongst other reasons for this discouragement, the Prophaneness and horrid Blasphemies, which are occasioned by the passionate prosecution of such Gaming.

Attalus King of *Asia* at his leisure hours recreated himself in his Gardens, and sometimes diverted himself in Casting of Statues. It is said of *Demetrius Poliorcetes*, that his Pastime was spent in making Warlike Engines: and of *Europus* King of *Macedon*, that at his spare hours he made Lights. It is reported that the Kings of *Parthia* were used to spend their idle hours in Sharpening of Spears. And *Dionysius* the younger, when he was at Peace, would contrive little Wains, Seats and Tables with wonderful Art. I suppose the custom of the *Ottomon* Emperours, who always take some Handicraft Employment upon them

all things are lawful for me, but all things edifie not. And what he prescribes to himself, in the following part of the Chapter, he gives as a Rule to all Christians under the particular case of Meats offered to Idols.

*Deteriores om-
nes sumus li-
centiâ Ter.
Heaur.*

If what has been said, seems to bear too hard upon this point: to be sure it is an Error on the safest-side; and will easily be pardoned by all, that are worthy to have it asked at their hands. For Liberty, especially in things of this kind, is like an edged tool: which if not skilfully managed, cuts the Fingers, if not the Throat of him that uses it.

II. The other Prohibition is conditional: because the thing forbid is only so occasionally. For Publick-Houses are necessary for Travellers and Way-Faring People, and convenient many times for meeting upon common Business. But, as many things appointed for good Ends are abused, so none more shamefully than these. That which was appointed for Refreshment, is made the receptacle of Idleness and Debauchery: and that which is allowed for honest Purposes, is too frequently made use of to contrive Mischief. However, the design of the Canon in this particular is to warn us of two Dangers; the one relating to our Selves, and the other to our Neighbour. Both nicely to be observed, and subjected to that caution of Tully, (a) *There are some things which ought not to be done, tho they be Lawful.*

(a) *Est aliquid
quod non oportet,
etiam si licet.
Cic. Orat.
3. pro Corn.
Balbo.*

I. In relation to our Selves we should consider very well, what sort of Company we are like to meet with in those Publick-Houses, before we go to them. Whether we may not be drawn into a complaisance that may go

beyond

beyond Discretion. For if your Company be given to Excess, it is the Interest of those places to promote it, and by consequence they will be sure to do it. Besides there is another reason should make us wary, how we comply with invitations to such Houses; lest by an over-easiness in yielding to importunities of this kind, we insensibly steal into an Idle Habit; and instead of a Modest Complacency, when we are asked the question, become at last forward to attack others. *Nemo repente fit stupidus*: but it is so natural to advance in Folly, that, unless a Man keep a strict hand upon himself, the Clowd which seem'd but as a Hand at first, may in a little time draw such a Storm after it, as may Overwhelm those that come in its way. Now the ready course for a Man to avoid the Danger of these Temptations, is to take up a firm Resolution never to go into any of those Houses, when it may reasonably be avoided. For such a Resolution once well fix'd, will keep him always upon his Guard; and he will never do the thing, till he sees a very good or necessary reason for it.

II. The care we ought to have upon this account in respect to our Neighbour, is neither to set him an ill Example, nor give him Offence by abusing our Liberty. It gives too just a cause of suspicion to be seen in disorderly Company, tho' we be ever so Sober our selves: and it is never to be excused from setting a very Ill Example, if we unduly or too frequently haunt these places. Indeed the Abuses committed in them are so Scandalous and Infamous; that I should think no consideration likelier to make us wise in this regard.

For it must be confessed, that Idleness and Tipling are Faults, wherever they are found: but in Publick-Houses they are doubly Scandalous and Shameful, because they are lyable so much more to expose to the View and Censure of all the World. Therefore it is no new thing to see such matters animadverted upon. *Claudius Caesar* (a)

(a) *Tradit
historicus Di-
on, Claudium
Caesarem Cau-
ponas, in quas
poturi diver-
terent, soluisse.
Cel. Rhod. l.
37. Col. 1492.*

put down all Tipling-Houses. And if our Ancient Laws take no notice of these matters; it is, because *England*, generally speaking, was a Sober Nation, till the Fashion was brought over from Foreign Parts, where better things might have been learnt. But when once this evil Practice took place amongst us, the Inconveniencies were so many, the Scandals so gross and the Mischief, to the Publick so apparent, that you will find from that date nothing more strictly directed to be look'd after, nor attended with quicker Penalties upon the Offender, nor oftner repeated than the Laws which animadvert upon those that unnecessarily haunt such Publick-Houses or that are the keepers of them; as well as those that are taken in actual disorder. (b)

(b) 1. *Fac. c. 9*
4. *Fac. c. 4*
7. *Fac. c. 10*
2. *Fac. c. 7*
1. *Car. c. 4*
3. *Car. c. 3*
5.

The Sum of all is this. It is justly expected, that the Honour of God, the Service of his Church and Good of Mens Souls should be always upon our Minds, when we give Testimonials for those that are to serve in Gods House: that neither for Fear nor Favour, but as in Conscience we may answer before God and Man for the Truth of what we certify. As being well assured, if through Negligence or Easiness we Subscribe to what we are not well apprised of from our own experience; whatever harm comes by the unsitness or Scandal of the Persons so recommended, we shall be deeply partakers of the Guilt of it, besides the great blame of Rashness in a matter

of that Importance. And as for avoiding offence we are to abstain from *all appearance of Evil*: so especially are we obliged not to engage our selves in those things, which are of ill Report. For it would be inexcusable in us to abuse our Liberty in those things, which are of ill Fame: when it is our Duty to Abstain even from things of common use and convenience, so oft as it may give offence.

All things indeed are pure; but it is Evil for that Man who eateth with offence. The pretence of giving a greater lustre to Chastity by taking in Young Women to cohabit purely for Religious Conversation, would not pass upon the World. The (a) Council of Nice; ye know, as did afterwards several Imperial Laws and Provincial Councils, forbid all such practice, as Scandalous, because it has an ill Aspect; and would therefore make him have so too, that should take it upon him. For as it is a *Datum* in Mathematicks, that if you put unequal things to equal, the whole will be unequal: so it is in Morality likewise, if a Vertuous Man will be so unequally yoked as to venture upon an action that gives Scandal, himself shall thereby become scandalous. For the prevention of which these words of St. Paul may most fitly be applied, *That no Man put a Stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his Brothers way.*

Rom. 14. 20.

(a) Con. 3. by the name of *circumstantia*

Rom. 14. 13.

Thus have I endeavoured to set down the substance of our Conference upon these two important Injunctions. Which when I weigh, with the Charge that lies upon us for their due Execution, I Tremble to think of the account we are to give. We are Messengers sent to deliver the Oracles of God; and Wo be to us, if we keep them back. We are Stewards of the manifold Mysteries of the Gospel, and Deplorable is our Case if we be not found Faithful.

We:

We are Watchmen to Watch for the Souls of Men: thro our fault they miscarry, our Souls are to answer it. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, be Vigilant that whenever he shall come ye may be found prepared that comfortable Applause, *Well done, good and faithful Servant. Amen.*

Your Affectionate Brother,

H. L.

F I N I S.
